



Greenlee Chamber of Commerce

Thursday, May 12, 2011

Gov. Jan Brewer

Thank you, and good afternoon, everyone!

First, I want to congratulate you for your dedication and commitment to building a NEW AND IMPROVED Greenlee Chamber of Commerce.

But, not only that.

I also want to congratulate you because you recognize what the building blocks SHOULD be.

You're building your economy ...

-- You're understanding the importance of tourism ...

-- AND, you're recognizing the value of education.

I've just come from a terrific mine tour -- which emphasized for me the importance of that industry -- and its importance to you.

But, you recognize that you can attract businesses -- AND people -- with the OTHER resources you have -- and those you intend to improve -- and build upon.

I commend you for rolling up your sleeves and getting to work. That's really what we did as a STATE.

Let me just mention a few things that we've done in the first 100 days since I took the Oath of Office this past January:

In less than 100 days, we put Arizona back to work with the Arizona Competitiveness Package and the formation of the Commerce Authority focused SOLELY on quality job creation AND retention.

We targeted business incentives -- and broad tax reform to lure the best employers, so Arizona can now compete on a global scale.

We instituted historic reforms to modernize Medicaid for the future, and our plan has been submitted to the federal government for consideration.

It's a plan that maintains coverage for current AHCCCS members, while shrinking Medicaid rolls over time.

It makes greater use of co-pays to encourage AHCCCS members to take greater responsibility for their care -- AND it preserves the Medicaid program while reducing the taxpayer burden -- including \$500 million in savings in the first year alone.

In less than 100 days, we negotiated a balanced state budget without devastating core state services. The cuts we negotiated are targeted and realistic.

For example, the cuts to K-12 amount to about 2 percent of its total funding from all sources.

Yes, these education cuts ARE more than I wanted, but they're HALF what the Legislature proposed.

Further, I was able to keep cuts to universities under \$200 million -- again, more than I wanted, but about \$37 million LESS than some legislators proposed.

The budget minimizes cost shifts -- especially on rural counties -- while it preserves core services and protects Arizona's most vulnerable to the greatest extent possible.

I am quick to remind critics -- none here, I hope -- that without Proposition 100, cuts to education and other services would have been FAR deeper.

Finally, we've approved comprehensive pension reform that preserves the solvency of the system.

That reform increases employee contributions, while easing the burden on taxpayers. It cracks down on abuses -- like double-dipping -- and helps ensure Arizona's state pension system is healthy for the future.

Earlier, I mentioned the formation of the Commerce Authority which is based on a belief in the awesome power of free enterprise -- with private businesses finally freed to compete on the global stage -- we're focused on both urban AND RURAL job creation.

We're helping ensure that business formation and business growth stems from EVERY region of the state.

As you might know, Becky Nutt, your Executive Director, serves on my Rural Business Advisory Council, and I'm grateful for her contribution to advancing rural communities across our entire state and creating more quality jobs.

I AM committed to creating more quality jobs.

Wherever they are, employers need a skilled workforce -- and employees want a good school system for their children.

Let me close by simply saying, you might be a NEW organization, but I know the Greenlee Chamber of Commerce understands the importance of community and the importance of jobs as well as anyone.

May God bless you and your families, and our Great State of Arizona.

And may God always bless and protect the United States of America.

Thank you.